

Take me to Korriban

by Redone

Category: Star Wars

Language: English

Status: Completed

Published: 2000-05-25 09:00:00

Updated: 2001-02-08 09:00:00

Packaged: 2016-04-27 18:31:38

Rating: K+

Chapters: 1

Words: 5,291

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: The ritual of becoming a Sith Apprentice, and the ritual of the end of Apprenticeship. Newly edited.

Take me to Korriban

****Take Me To Korriban****

****by Redone****

* * *

> <p>Disclaimer: Maul, His Taller Companion and Dead Organic Matter in a Box belong to George Lucas and Lucasfilms Ltd. I use them without permission. I make no money out of it. I've also borrowed a couple of things from Jude Watson. You know what when you read. These, of course, belong to Jude Watson. Again: no permission asked, no money made. <p>

Acknowledgements: A thousand thanks for my glorious beta-readers indigobunting and Belle; I bow before your superior wisdom!

I also owe a load of thanks to Erik BÃ¶ge, ZP and all those who helped me with suggestions about what the Temple should be like. Even if I didn't take your suggestions, they inspired me.

* * *

> <p>
 There is no peace, there is anger.
>There is no fear, there is power.
There is no death, there is immortality.
>There is no weakness, there is the Dark Side.
I am the Heart of Darkness.
>I know no fear,
But rather I instill it in my enemies.
>I am the destroyer of worlds.
I know the power of the Dark Side.

>I am the fire of hate.
All the Universe bows before me.
>I pledge myself to the Darkness.
For I have found true life,

>In the death of the light. - Dark Jedi Code -

* * *

>

> <p> As the last rays of sun coloured the strips of clouds at the horizon, a streak of light flew across the skies and a boom rattled the peace of the wide valley. A shuttle descended and settled on the flat grassland. The ramp lowered and two dark figures strode out.

_The smaller one threw his head back, inhaled deeply and sighed contentedly. "We'll spend the night here," he said. "The Journey begins at sunrise." He walked away from the ship, to a small hillock overlooking the valley. He sat on a rock, facing west, looking at the now purplish clouds. His companion "hardly more than a black silhouette by now" followed him. _The light faded quickly._

_"There," the smaller man pointed due west, at the range of mountains on the other side of the vale that stretched before them. A thin stripe of lighter grey could barely _be discerned, cutting the vale in half "the old road._

His companion sat beside him. They remained silent a long while.

"Here I began my path as Sith Apprentice," the smaller man said. "At last a circle will be complete." He let out a low chuckle. "You know, I like things complete and perfect."

"Yet you never finished your apprenticeship."

"I'm finishing it now. This is the end of the Path of Apprenticeship."

"At the end of apprenticeship you should overcome your Master, slay him."

"No "slaying the Master is just a trial. At the end of apprenticeship you repay your debt to the Master. Then the future is yours. You're free to become Master if you so wish."

The taller man shook his head in disagreement, but didn't argue. Again silence stretched between them for a time until the sky grew completely dark.

The taller man broke the silence. "Would you care to share your memories?"

"Why would you care?"

"As you said, that's something I never had. I don't even know the rites."

"Perhaps I should perform the Coming for you."

_"Oh no "I'll never be your apprentice, Lord Maul. If our Master didn't see fit to perform it for me, I won't take it from

you."_

The smaller man â€" Maul â€" chuckled again. "Of course. You'd have to rise up and slay me."

"That I'd do gladly."_

"You wouldn't find it easy."

"Force, I'm not planning to slay you at the moment! I just asked you to show me the rite."

"And I just told you that if you want to be a true Sith, I'm the only one alive who can give you this initiation."

"I don'tâ€|Oh thousand deep hells, why don't you just do your reminiscing and let me watch."

>

* * *

>

> <p>We landed at a place that my Master indicated, at about sundown, and spent the night in the ship. Early the next morning we started off to the Temple. We travelled on foot, as was the custom, signifying respect to great ancient Masters and their teaching, and giving one an opportunity to reflect on the greatness of the tradition and one's own position within it. I followed my Master, wearing my formal robes, one step behind his left shoulder, a position I had got used to over the past few years when I had been living with him. I carried a small pack containing our supplies â€" and (something that had puzzled me at first, but later I understood my Master's smirk when he suggested I should include it in my pack) a spare pair of pants. <p>

As we went on, the huge dark pyramidal structure loomed far ahead of us over the wide and deep valley. I remember the calm weather. No wisp of wind stirred the trees' limp leaves and no living thing moved within the valley... not a single bird heard or seen, not even an insect buzzing. Nothing at all. Yet, oddly dark grey-and-magenta clouds swept over the sky. My Master said it was a good sign. I found this odd, because I had never heard him mention signs and omens before.

"Everything has a meaning," he shot over his shoulder, never slowing his steady strides. "You must learn to read them, and then to use them."

"Yes, my Master," I said as always, but my heart lifted - as if it could be lifted any further. This day would make me not only apprentice to a Sith Master, but a Sith Apprentice. Yes, I vowed, I would learn anything and everything. I felt ready to learn every insignificant bug in the galaxy to have my Master deem me worthy.

Grey stone figures and pillars lined the road on both sides, most standing, but a few fallen. My Master had explained that some represented images of ancient Sith Masters while others stood for Apprentices who had failed to obtain Mastery yet had made important contribution to the Order, so that their Masters had seen fit to

perpetuate the memory of their role in the Order in this way. Still others marked important events or symbols of places. I could sense the power they all radiated, the dark power I had already become acquainted with, yet with a dignity of age I had not felt before. I took in the crumbled edges, the moss-filled cavities, the weather-stripped surfaces, and felt great pride to be a part of this long history. Standing there, I realized the glory of the place and smiled. Neither the dignified Jedi Council nor the Senate, nor anyone in the entire Galaxy entertained any knowledge of this jewel of our Order's power " _my_ Order's power " or of the maelstrom of Force in this place. Each step toward the Temple stairs stood for a step on the Path and this humbled me, awed me, purified me of all personal weaknesses and imperfections in order to make me a worthy vessel for the gift I would receive " the unspeakable, unimaginable Dark Side power.

At sunset we stopped at a place where the Temple's long and deep shadow ended. My Master took my bag from me and commanded me to kneel where I stood in the middle of the road. I knew I could not eat, drink or sleep, but only meditate until he returned.

I contemplated the dark power of the Force the whole night. My mind never wavered. I felt the strong Force-currents of this place flow through me. Never had meditation come so easily to me " not that I ever had any difficulties focusing my mind, but here it seemed to come unaided from without me and positively slam down on my head.

Sunrise brought my Master to my side without warning. I had failed to notice him arrive and quickly turned on my knees to face him. He touched my brow.

"My Son, today you face your First Coming. I will present you to your ancestors. Today you will meet with your roots. You will renounce the false peace of stagnation and find your strength in the bottomless well of anger and rage."

Never before or after would he call me 'Son,' yet I hoped there might come a time in the future I might call him 'Father' just once. He bade me rise and we proceeded toward the huge temple. Spacious fields of grass and scant, stunted shrubs surrounded the structure, the plants exuding a bitter, yet not unpleasant scent not unlike my homeworld's mountain pastures.

At the stairs my Master stopped and commanded me to kneel. Only Masters trod these stone steps before the temple doors, as the path named the Path of Apprenticeship required an Apprentice such as I to crawl on my knees to mark our submission and dedication. My Master took my recently constructed lightsabre to present to the Ancients at the altar as another First Coming custom.

As I knelt on the first step, my Master said: "You have served well, my Son, you have been loyal, dedicated and fearless, and I have deemed you worthy of this day. You are ready to learn where your true power lies."

Worthy. I felt so proud. I knew my Master had trained one or two apprentices before me. They, however, had never made it so far. They had not been worthy. One had been " had _seemed_ worthy, but obviously had proven otherwise, else I would not be here. He had died

about a year after his initiation.

I climbed the entire way on my knees, head respectfully lowered. On the last step my Master touched my forehead again.

"My Son," he intoned, "I bring you here today as your Master. I represent everything and without me, you are nothing. You are what I make you, as I was made before you and all other Masters before me. Within me reside all Masters, as they have represented what I am. I am The Sith. Though flesh may perish, The Sith remains forever."

We crossed a small square to the heavy doors of the temple - about ten paces. Gravel and small stones covered the ground, shredding my pants and bloodying my knees. I ignored both and steadfastly crawled on behind my Master.

At the door the Master once again turned to face me. Again he laid his hand on my headâ€” carefully, to avoid hornsâ€”

* * *

> <p>(His companion snorted. Maul chuckled, "Yes, after a few initial incidents he was always very careful.")

* * *

> <p>"My Son," he said, and pressed my head even lower. Finally, my forehead touched my Master's knees. I waited for him to continue, but he just stood very still, his hand pressing me down. I reached out with my senses to find what had caught his attention, but couldn't find anything. <p>

Then I understood. Yet another lesson he taught me â€” of silence, the symbol of all the unspeakable things I had yet to learn. Things of secret wisdom and power. The Dark Side.

My master had often taught me that the Dark Side power was never given freely; it had to be taken, conquered. "The Dark Side does not give gifts," he used to repeat. "It doesn't co-operate. If you want to use it, you must bend it to your will and tame it. And in order to do that, you must relinquish all weakness, or the Dark Side will use it against you."

These words, more than anything, made me realize how much dedication, effort and sheer strength the path of a Sith Apprentice required. The enormity of this task awed me. Still, nothing would quench my tremendous hunger to test myself, to ride the storm, to dance the flames, to get to know this power firsthand. And I felt certain I could accomplish it. As confidence washed over me, I sensed his approval. He removed his hand from my forehead.

"My Son, I hope you will make me proud." He turned and gestured. Slowly, noiselessly, the huge door began to slide open.

>

* * *

>

> <p>Slowly, blackness made way to grey shapes until the world regained its colour. Pre-dawn chill freshened the stale air in the

valley.

Lord Maul strode down the ramp, wearing nothing but trousers, and stretched like a cat. "Ha!" he cried. "The sky's clear!"

"And what does it portend?" a voice sounded from within.

"That today will be fine," he said, grinning, and again stretched luxuriantly. Then he disappeared into the shuttle.

After a while he re-emerged, dressed in his full formal robes, the hood of his pleated cloak half hiding his face. His taller companion followed him, a long rectangular box floating behind them on a repulsorlift carrier.

They walked over the hill where they had sat the night before, descended on the other side and came upon the old paved road that ran across the broad valley. Once there, Lord Maul stopped to wait for his companion to catch up.

"We must make things clear at this point," Maul told him. "If I am to perform the Coming, I will emerge as Master from the temple."

"True," his companion said.

"However, the Master chose you over me, and I want to honour his choice. I offered it yesterday, and I repeat my offer: should you choose so, I will perform the rites for you, and you will be the next Master. If not, I will."

"Lord Maul, I have no such ambitions. You know my wishes. I want the Sith destroyed. If you are the Sith, I will watch over you, and if necessary, destroy you."

Maul shrugged. "Still, I cannot allow our tradition to disappear. My loyalty to my Master and Order forbids it. I am but what he made me and if I allow my Master's teaching to perish, it would mean merely another form of self-destruction. I must ensure another Sith Master follows in order to preserve continuity, and with the rite I will acquire new powers. Then you may attempt to destroy me if you can!"

The other man chuckled. "So aggressive? Do you realize what you are doing? You're haggling like an old woman, where a true Sith should act. You are a mock-Sith."

"I know," Maul said seriously. "I have not been a true Sith for a long time" ever since the day I..." He fell silent, gazing pensively at the coffin. "But no doubt our Master has told you what happened. You know what the irony is? That I did what I did on my Master's orders." He laughed a mirthless laugh. "On second thought, maybe my Master did me a favour."

The other didn't answer. And what could he have said?

"I still hope you reconsider," Maul said. "You know it's much easier for a Sith to watch over another Sith."

_With that, he set off at a steady, measured pace. With a small hiss

the repulsorlift engine came to life again and floated obediently behind the black figure._

His taller companion remained standing, deep in thought, flexing his hands as if in indecision. Finally, with a sigh, he hurried to catch up with the other.

>

* * *

>

> <p>Inside, I found it completely dark, allowing me to see nothing more than the dusty cube of light shining in from the doorway. I remained kneeling at the door, as instructed, while my Master entered. Deep in the gloom, a flicker began and soon grew to illuminate a dais at the end of a huge room. With awe, I realised I gazed upon the Altar. As my Master moved about I could see him as a black shadow that now and then blotted out the point of light.
<p>

More lights appeared, allowing me to see him clearly. He stepped up and sat on the Master's throne. I stood and moved into the chilly hall. The line was crossed: I had made my final decision. The rest of the ceremony was really only about sealing the pledge. Slowly, I walked down the aisle toward the throne.

My Master's words hammered in my head. "I am The Sith. I am The Sith. I am The Sith."

As I approached him, sitting on the throne, his pale hands on the armrests, his whole demeanour motionless yet alert, I felt... No, I knew he indeed embodied The Sith. Within him resided the ultimate power in the known galaxy, an unstoppable force, the Heart of Darkness, the Fire of Hate. And, in what I saw as an act of infinite generosity, he had laid that same power before me to reach out and grab for myself.

"Son, come and take it - if you dare. If you can."

I dare. I can. I will, I vowed.

â€" Who are you, and what do you want?

â€" I am a seeker. I seek the truth. I want power. I want immortality.

â€" What truth? What power?

â€" The truth of the death of light. The ultimate power that binds everything.

â€" What is the source of that power?

â€" The Dark Side.

â€" Is that what you want?

"Yes," I sighed, "oh, yes."

â€" What will you give to get what you want?

â€" My service. My loyalty. My blood, my life. Everything. I give everything, because I want everything. I pledge my whole self to the Darkness, for I have found true life in the death of the light.

And I knelt before my master in supplication.

"So be it."

>

* * *

> <p>

Lost in thought, Maul remained quiet for a while. Finally, his companion became impatient.

"Well? Aren't you going to continue?"

Finally his companion became impatient. "Well? Aren't you going to continue?"

Maul almost smiled. "Curious, aren't you?"

They moved on for a minutes in silence, then Maul continued. "The rite that followedâ€¦ I believe each Sith finds it extremely personal. If you remain curious you may research the procedure in the Master's personal archive, but what occurs during the actual ritual remains between Master and Apprentice. Despite his intimate involvement in it, my Master and I never discussed what happened afterwards. What transpired remains between the Sith and me."

Morning freshness soon transformed into stifling heat of midday. Every step stirred up clouds of dust that their cloaks were only too happy to collect, but they paid no attention.

After noon Maul turned away from the main road and walked over to a solitary rock shooting upward from the ground like the last tooth in an old woman's mouth. There he found a shaded place and with an elegant Force-gesture, he guided the box dutifully following him to settle on the ground so he might sit on it. He patted the other end: "Come on, sit down." Sensing the other man's hesitation, he grinned triumphantly, like a cat that has just caught a bird.

"Superstitious, eh? You know what Master would say? 'Don't let yourself be deceived or restricted by names. Where you see a coffin, I see but a box with some decaying organic matter in it; and I am free to use it to my advantage.' So," he tapped the coffin with his heel, "let the old man serve us for one last time."

"Strange that you should say so," his companion said, lowering himself to the indicated place, "you with all your devotion and respect towards all masters."

"Hah!" Maul said dismissively, "I'm free now â€" I can take my pleasure in anything I do. And," he added with a smirk, "I've got no young apprentice to impress. So let's just take things easy."

_After a while they took to the road again. In late afternoon they came to an open landscape and could see the huge Temple clearly ahead of them, still a couple of hours away, at the foot of the mountain range that closed the valley. To the left lay a structure's ruins, its purpose long forgotten. The first statues stood on either side of the road. Maul scanned the surroundings for the skeletons, then noted with some satisfaction: _

_"No guardians in sight. My Halqua must be still intact, then. I am still acceptable." _

_He walked to the statue on the left side of the road, measured a few paces from it and studied the ground intently. _

_"The Master's place lays here?" his companion inquired. _

_"Yes. I'll have the statue made and put it here." Maul straightened, drew his hood deeply over his face, hid his hands in the sleeves and asked, "How does it look?" And laughed his characteristic abrupt "ha!" _

_Then he jutted out his jaw, hooked thumbs to his belt and glared. "Like that better?" _

_The other made an impatient gesture. "Trust me, Lord Maul, I can take a hint. And the answer is still 'no'." _
>

* * *

> <p>

Master walked me through the labyrinth of passageways and halls into a long, narrow, dusty room. Grey light came in through a couple of narrow slits high above.

"Do you know where we are?" my Master asked. "This is the Hall of Apprentices. All initiated apprentices have placed their gravestones here. Once an apprentice becomes a Master, he removes the stone to another room. Those you see here" â€" he made a sweeping gesture with his hand â€" "failed." He spat out the word from a corner of his mouth. I cringed. Few were things that I feared; one of these was the word "failed" from my Master.

There were many stones. A thick layer of dust covered them. Some were broken.

"Are all those apprentices buried here, Master?"

"No, none. A Master would throw such into the cellar for temple-rats to devour. This here only serves as a reminder where weakness and lack of dedication lead."

I shuddered. Foul creatures consuming one's dead body seemed the worst disgrace I could imagine.

Next my Master took me to thisâ€" cellar. It looked like a dry well with several narrow openings at the bottom covered with heavy, Force-enhanced steel bars. Perhaps leading to other passageways

similar to the one we stood in. Rags and bones littered the floor and the stench nearly overwhelmed me. As I peered into the dimness, I saw two or three dark shadows disappear through one of the steel grids.

Master watched me while I struggled not to vomit, then said casually, "Occasionally they were thrown in here before they were dead."

I remembered the night my Master had shut me in my room and filled it with dinkos. From what I had observed, dinkos stood no chance with temple-rats, the latter being ruthless, sly, blood-drinking creatures who attacked in packs. And, unlike dinkos, they didn't kill you first, merely ate one alive; or at least they began it while the victim lived.

Somehow, the memory of dinkos helped me pull myself together. My whole training so far had readied me for this day, just as this day's training would prepare me for the future.

"I understand, Master," I said.

We walked to another hall under the Temple. This section of the Temple reached deep into the rock.

My Master turned to me. "Now, my Son, your first task to begin your new life is to prepare for death. You will make a gravestone for yourself."

Usually, a Sith cut a gravestone from the mountain roots that lay at the temple's foot. The stone had a more or less fixed size, its first purpose to cover the tomb once the body lay inside. The slabs doubled as Halqua, holders of life-force. Customary, though not required, a Sith would carve something on the stone, often signifying intents or desires. Many carved their names, personal seals or symbols through which they were identified.

My Master gave me my lightsabre and left me. For quite some time I walked around in the huge cavernous hall. Finally, I found what I was looking for – a perfect spot where I could cut out the required stone. Even with such a powerful tool as a lightsabre, it took me some time.

Finally I had what I needed. It must have been night already, perhaps even the next morning, but I could not tell.

I knelt to meditate on the design of the slab. At last, I came up with a somewhat unorthodox solution. When looking around, I had seen a sand-filled crevice. Using my cloak as a bag, I carried a load of sand to the slab, polished it slightly, and then used my lightsabre to fuse sand and rock on the surface. A glazed surface of various hues resulted. Once it cooled, I prepared to engrave it. The design I intended to inscribe I had taken from an Iridonian sacral alphabet hieroglyph. I had searched until I had found one that would closely correspond to my Sith name, Maul. When turned upside down, the hieroglyph depicted 'fire' and when written in the slab centre, would depend on which side the viewer stood as to its meaning. In the hieroglyph's heart, I would carve the smooth depression to hold my Halqua.

For some time, I meditated, trying to picture the hieroglyph in my

mind. When I felt ready, I cut a letter of bare, raw rock into the glassy surface.

I used the Force to levitate the slab, and so carried it over my head to the great hall. The slightest waver in concentration, and the slab would have crushed me under its weight. "I'm carrying my own death," I thought, "and it's heavy!"

Almost three days and nights it had taken me to finish this task, yet I had forgotten everything around me except the work at hand. The final act of levitating the rock all but exhausted me; still I could not afford a moment's rest. Dust and sweat covered me as I moved toward the Altar. Maintaining control, I lay my finished product before it.

I approached my Master's throne and informed him that I was ready. While he viewed my work, I knelt beside him, waiting his approval or disapproval.

* * *

> <p>Later, my Master took me to a room I supposed lay nearer to the temple complex's heart than the apprentices' dusty chamber. Actually, it appeared yet another long and narrow corridor, reinforcing my perception of the temple's construction as a labyrinth. A line of torches burned on the walls, the mosaic floor patterned with Sith hieroglyphs and along the walls rested ancient Masters in their tombs. <p>

Here the roots of our heritage lay. Sith tradition dictated entombing the Masters' bodies in stone, allowing their mummification in the dry air with the help of some Force manipulation. Although partly due to the need to protect the living Master from the vengeance of his forebears' spirits, the tomb also provided an anchor to the living, a place they might come to contact those very shades.

My Master's stone stood last in line. Relatively simple, yet elegant, the stone bore a clear, unadorned Aurabesh inscription in the same style as Darth Bane's. Yet, where Darth Bane proclaimed 'I am the Heart of Darkness,' my Master's stone merely stated, 'I am.' A beautiful hand-shaped crystal plate hung above these words, holding his blood -- the Halqua.

The Halqua tradition, relatively new in our order, appeared a generation after Darth Bane with the principal aim to protect continuity. The ignorant only see the blood, yet the offering remains as fresh and viable as the moment it flowed from living veins, until the owner's death. At that time, Force-protection lifts and temple-rats devour it. Once an initiate has pledged himself to his Master and to the Sith, the Master cannot take another apprentice before the previous one's destruction. Upon this event, the apprentice's Halqua disappears and his vows dissolve. A wise arrangement, one which helps preserve secrecy, ensuring that only the best succeed to the throne and allowing apprentices the chance to attain Mastery. Thus, the tradition protected itself.

My Master stopped before his gravestone and laid his hand on it.

"One day, when you are ready, you will be the Sith Master. Then,

wherever you happen to be, you must take me to Korriban and lay my body here where it belongs."

"I will, Master," I promised.

He gave me a crooked smile. "I hope you will. It is really in your own best interests. But you still have much to learn."

Upon this pronouncement, we returned to the great hall where I made my blood sacrifice and my Master prepared my Halqua. When finished with this rite, I truly became Lord Darth Maul, Sith Apprentice.

* * *

>

> <p>Once again they stopped at the shadow's edge, almost before the stairs. Wordlessly Lord Maul took off his combat gloves, pulled his cowl to hide his face and adjusted the Sith clasp that held together his cloak; wordlessly the two men nodded to each other, and Maul knelt behind the coffin in a formal position, his head lowered, one hand resting on the coffin-lid. His companion stood silently behind him, hands clasped behind his back, sunken in thoughts of his own.

For hours Maul meditated there, drawing to conclusion the life that had taken him so far, that of his passionate, yet so painful, relationship with his Master. Indeed, he remained what his Master had made him. His Master had been the Heart of Darkness and Maul had become the Fire of Hate, and yet they had been as one. As his Master had been The Sith, so he had been, through his Master. Now, with his Master gone, Maul remained The Sith, yet nothing had changed. The Sith had simply taken on a new body. Flesh may perish, but The Sith is forever.

When he felt he was ready, he rose slowly. One last time he turned toward his companion and raised his lightsabre in salute, a gesture that went unanswered. The repulsor engines came to life with a whirr, floating the coffin neatly into his reach. Proudly Lord Maul lay his foot on the first step, feeling his knees itch.

"Father," he said softly, "I have brought you here as promised. Today you will be laid beside your ancestors, where you belong. A circle is complete; The Sith has passed on."

>

> <p>

I pledge myself to the Darkness.

>For I have found true life,
In the death of the light.

>

* * *

>

> Note:

_I tried to build the story on the basis of the Dark Jedi code.

Sidious's four ritual utterances correspond to the first four lines, which in my mind are the key lines of the Code. Next comes Maul's satori-like experience of The Sith, which is the second part of the Code. Then, in the next turn of the spiral, comes Maul's offering himself to the Sith (first line), overcoming his fears both ritually and literally (second line), dealing with death and immortality (third line). The fourth line corresponds to the end of Maul's apprenticeship, realisation of his goal " the part of the other timeline in the story. And again his realisation of what is the Sith, this time not as a sudden lightning-like experience, but the fruit of a long process of his development._ _Redone_

* * *

>

>

End
file.